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United States Senate

July 27, 2010

RELEASED IN FULL

The Honorable William Burns
Under Secretary for Political Affairs
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20520-0099

Dear Under Secretary Burns:

I write as a follow-up to our July 2, 2010, phone call, wherein I visited with you and other officials at the U.S. Department of State regarding the Keystone XL pipeline.

During our conversation, I stressed to you the importance of the State Department seeking further information and viewpoints from state and local officials within my home state of Nebraska regarding the pipeline before completing your agency's review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This is absolutely essential in light of recent concerns raised by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regarding the Draft EIS and an extension of the timetable for review of the EIS, as recently posted on the State Department's website: "After further consultation with those agencies, the Department has extended the time for all consulted federal agencies to provide their views to the Department until ninety (90) days following issuance of the final EIS." By doing so, the State Department will gain a better understanding of the safety issues and environmental impacts which the proposed oil pipeline would have on Nebraska and its ecosystem.

With the ongoing tragedy in the Gulf of Mexico and today's pipeline break into the Kalamazoo River in southwest Michigan, it is important in my view that the State Department seeks out all of the analyses it can regarding the Keystone XL pipeline, not only from federal sources, but also from state government agencies. Doing so will help in answering the many concerns and uncertainties my constituency has raised regarding the proposed pipeline and ensure that whatever decision the State Department makes will take into full account the importance of the Ogallala Aquifer and the Sandhills to Nebraska's economic and agricultural livelihood.

Therefore, I respectfully request an update as to the State Department's efforts, including copies of letters from the agency and responses received, to gain a greater understanding from state and local officials surrounding the environmental and economic impacts the proposed pipeline will have on my home state of Nebraska.

Mr. Under Secretary, thank you for your consideration of my request. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,



E. Benjamin Nelson
United States Senator

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REVIEW AUTHORITY: ADOLPH H EISNER

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